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THE

Commonweal

A SPECIAL ISSUE

Art and the Liturgy

What Makes a Church 'Liturgical'?

by H. A. Reinhold

Sacred Art Today

Great Mysteries Reduced to Cuteness

by Robert E. Rambusch

The Artist As Apostle

Christian Art in an Age of Crisis

by Vincent J. Hope

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THE DOWNSIDE REVIEW

THE SPRING NUMBER is, again, largely philosophical. To begin with, the Editor exposes a flaw which vitiates his article on Analogy in the previous number. This number, with articles on Eckhart, linguistic analysis, and the historical approach to Gregorian chant, is still available. On the matter of Analogy, the Editor came under heavy fire from some Oxford philosophers, and has been forced to a rather radical stock-taking. The effect is to show Analogy in a clearer light, as the effect rather than the principle of the *philosophia perennis,* which is thus vindicated more unequivocally than in the first article. Liberal use is made of Father Lonergan's *Insight,* which may be called without exaggeration the outstanding contribution of our age to the understanding of Saint Thomas. Father Laurence Bright, O.P., contributes a treatment of Creation, distinguishing between scientific and philosophical preoccupations, and there is a scholarly account of Newman's use of Butler's arguments, by J. Robinson of Edinburgh. There is an unusually large section of book reviews.

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Write to: The Secretary

THE DOWNSIDE REVIEW

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THE
Commonweal
A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature, and the Arts
THIRTY-FOURTH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

week by week

LITTLE ROCK AND NEW YORK

AT THIS WRITING, there has been no disorder reported in New York City's troubled schools for some days, which is a small blessing, perhaps, but nevertheless one to be grateful for. Some Americans, however, seem to take an incredible comfort in the violence which has torn the New York schools in recent weeks.

A number of Southern newspapers have seized upon these Northern educational woes as ammunition in their anti-integration campaigns, labeling the disturbances as "racist," and asking sarcastically when President Eisenhower will dispatch troops to the New York schools as he did to Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. Senator Herman Talmadge of Georgia has shed crocodile tears for the citizens of Brooklyn and drawn a parallel between them and the unhappy people of Little Rock. Perhaps the most generous comment from the South was that of Governor Frank Clement of Tennessee, who declared: "I never have said we haven't made mistakes, but I do say this: let's all get our dirty laundry out and wash it together. . . . I want them to leave us alone in Tennessee and I'm going to leave them alone in their troubles. . . ."

The linking of New York's school problems and those of Little Rock is no doubt a cynical maneuver on the part of some segregationists, but the publicity given this view—and not only in the South—may have produced among many Americans a sincere confusion over the roots of the New York trouble.

Sociologists, criminologists, anyone who has studied the matter, knows of the relation between socio-economic factors and the incidence of crime in a given community. Squalid housing, poverty, illiteracy, broken homes, working mothers, the absence of opportunities for social and economic betterment: these are the conditions which almost inevitably lead to serious social problems—in crime prevention, education, health, welfare, etc.

For many reasons—chiefly the accidents of history and the results of past and present discrimination—it is the Negro and the Puerto Rican who are beset by these tragic burdens more than any other group in New York. And insofar as this is true, the Negroes and Puerto Ricans who must live under such pressures will figure accordingly in the city's social problems, including education.

Except for these socio-economic factors, there is no "racial" explanation for the rash of juvenile delinquency in New York schools, which involves white, Negro and Puerto Rican children. The disturbances in the city's schools have not been over school or civic policies on race or integration.

REPRESENTING Northern cities as imposing worse conditions on the Negro than the South does, which is the line taken by some Southern spokesmen, is revealed to be absurd by the figures for northward Negro migration. Representing New York's school difficulties as the result of any innate racial factors, as a kind of Northern Little Rock, is demonstrably nonsensical. Representing New York's school troubles as the result of Northern segregation and discrimination, while not complete nonsense, is a misleading oversimplification. The significant fact is that in New York, whatever human injustice has been committed there in the past and is being committed today, the fundamental civil rights of all citizens are protected by law. In the schools, at the polls, in the use of public facilities, in an ever-widening area of life, the equal rights of all citizens are established by law and protected by law.

Northerners cannot in conscience assume a posture of righteousness in discussing the problem of

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integration, and such a posture does no good. At the same time, Southern invitations to weigh the question of beams and motes, however telling as moral arguments, do not bear upon the legal issues raised at Little Rock.

Southerners as well as Northerners have the right to debate the morality of segregation, to argue over what to do about racial problems and how to do it; Southerners have their right to deplore legislation and the interpretation of Constitutional law; they have their right to try to influence legislation and seek re-interpretation of the law. But they have the obligation to do this peaceably, within the framework of the law, relying on the legal instruments available to the citizens of a democracy for the expression of their will.

Violence, defiance of the law, repudiation of the orderly processes of government—these cannot be condoned, North, South, anywhere in the land. This is the issue of Little Rock. It is not the issue in New York.

FUNDS FOR DEVELOPMENT

THE CONNECTION between widespread national poverty and political weakness and instability is clearly demonstrable. It helps explain American anxieties about the sentiments of the underdeveloped countries of the world, where income per capita remains at an abysmal level. It explains why the Soviet foreign aid program, which only here and there has progressed much beyond the promise stage, has proved to be so effectual. Poverty, malnutrition, disease, ignorance and illiteracy comprise a vicious circle in which lack of energy and pervading lethargy condemn whole peoples to lives of unrelieved squalor and hopelessness—so that any promised change would appear a welcome one.

For the most part these are peoples who concentrate on producing raw materials: inadequate food for themselves and unfinished ingredients for foreign industrial processes. This is a losing game even in prosperous times, for low-cost raw materials are unequal to paying for the high-cost finished products that are imported in return. But when the wheels of Western industry slow down, as at present, the effect on these suppliers of raw materials is truly catastrophic. Prices tumble and demand falls off badly even at the ruinously lower price.

In a general way, then, the task in the underdeveloped areas appears to be twofold: to modernize local agriculture so that there will be enough to eat and to diversify national production so that these countries will be freed of constant pressure to pay for costly imports and able as well to export certain manufactures of their own, products reflecting their endowment of natural resources and potential human talents. Such are the economic objectives of technical assistance programs of the Point Four type. That is what many of its American advocates have principally in mind as "foreign aid."

Examples help make the point. At the Malaya meeting of the U.N. Economic Committee for Asia and the Far East, the United States agreed to contribute up to two million dollars for the development of the Mekong River basin in the interests of Cambodia, Laos, South Viet Nam and Thailand. The World Bank in Washington is to be asked for a loan of seventy-five million toward a French power project on the Kouikou River in Central Africa. This would power the production of aluminum, ferromanganese, ferrochromium, etc., and the commercial fertilizer required for the modernization of African agriculture. Eventually it would provide fifty thousand jobs.

Newly independent Ghana, West Africa, is reported to want an American loan of twenty-five millions for its Volta River project, for hydroelectric power and the establishment of an aluminum industry—part of a development program that will end that country's dependence on its annual cocoa crop. The East Ghor irrigation canal which Jordan plans to build, partly with the help of American funds, will enable its inhabitants to grow two or three crops a year on their previously parched soil and add seven million dollars to that country's annual income. Both in Honduras and in Ecuador, the United States is setting up engineer battalions to construct roads and bridges, clear land for cultivation, establish communications and provide training in the use of modern machinery. An important American agricultural college and farm has just been opened in Ethiopia.

These few current news items indicate the potentialities of enlightened foreign aid. They point to the type of intervention particularly suited to the American genius. And these are the projects and possibilities that are now most threatened by rabid economizers in Congress.

STUDY IN CONTRASTS

TWO STRIKES recently made the front pages in the same week, one new and one old. In Washington, the Senate committee on labor-man-

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agement abuses was investigating the bitter, long-drawn-out Kohler strike. Simultaneously, in New York, the International Ladies Garment Workers Union called its first big strike in twenty-five years. It would be hard to find a greater contrast than that between the two disputes.

The I.L.G.W.U., under the leadership of David Dubinsky, has long since become an honored institution. Over the years, the union has not only put on a Broadway musical ("Pins and Needles"), loaned money to hard-pressed manufacturers, made history with its trail-blazing pension and medical care plans, built cooperative housing and pioneered in various other reform activities; it has also brought to an essentially chaotic industry a stability far beyond anyone's dreams a quarter of a century ago. As a result, few unions have so much respect, not only from its members and the general public but from employers, who are frank in admitting that without the union the garment industry would be a jungle. Indeed, one of the main grievances cited by employers in the present dispute is the fact that too many hole-and-corner manufacturers have recently been successful in evading union requirements, forcing honest manufacturers to compete by cutting corners on employee earnings. As far as this dispute is concerned, from the very beginning no one doubted that the I.L.G.W.U. would succeed in its efforts to tighten up enforcement standards in its contracts, that the strike would not last long, and that the settlement would be one to benefit the industry as a whole.

In contrast to the almost carnival-like atmosphere that surrounded the I.L.G.W.U. strike were the daily reports on the Kohler investigation. The rancor of this four-year-old dispute has divided the town of Kohler, setting friend against friend and brother against brother. It has cost the United Auto Workers and the company millions of dollars; no one can compute its cost to the workers and to the small business man of the area. Above all, it has been a strike characterized from the start by violence and hatred.

Anyone who remembers the labor hearings before the old LaFollette committee will be struck by the similarity between those proceedings and the present hearings. The familiar props are here: importation of strikebreakers and pickets; encouragement of mass picketing; the purchase of arms and tear gas by the company; sporadic outbreaks of violence on both sides; the unyielding determination of the company not to permit arbitration of the dispute by any outside group. Three decades ago this pattern was all-too-familiar; it is not what the American people have a right to expect of labor relations in 1958.

Any strike that goes four years is bound to leave scars, and there is no sign yet of an end to this one. During the Senate hearings the company turned down another offer by the union to submit the matter to arbitration, and the depth of the feeling on both sides was clearly demonstrated by the testimony. One can only wonder, then, what anyone thought would be accomplished by fighting the battle all over again in a Senate hearing room.

It is said that Republican Senators, led by the bitterly anti-Reuther Senator Goldwater, forced the investigation on the rest of the committee. During the hearings on the Teamsters union, Senator Goldwater kept insisting that investigation of the Kohler strike would show Walter Reuther in such black colors that James Hoffa would look good in comparison. Judging by the proceedings so far, however, the Senator would have been wiser to have found some other outlet for his spleen against Mr. Reuther. It may well be argued—after the fact, at least—that the entire Kohler strike was a mistake from the beginning. But whatever illusions Senator Goldwater may have, no investigation will show Walter Reuther to have been a James Hoffa or a David Beck.

The Senators involved in this hearing must know that the Kohler company has a long history of bad labor relations. They must know that an examiner for the National Labor Relations Board took thousands of words of testimony in this case; in the end, although he did not give the union a clean bill of health, he did assign the overwhelming portion of the blame for the situation in Kohler to the company itself. In any case, the bitterness that has characterized this strike from the very beginning is only likely to be made worse by the current hearings in Washington. What else can be expected, in view of the partisan atmosphere that has marked this phase of the committee's work? In our opinion, it was a mistake for the Senate group to go into the Kohler strike at all; there is useful work waiting for the committee if it will only stop trying to pull Senator Goldwater's chestnuts out of the fire.

INTENSIFIED ORDEAL

ACCORDING to the *Fides* news service, the Catholic Church in China finds itself under a new, many-pronged attack aimed at its complete destruction. Communist Party members have been instructed to become baptized, infiltrate Catholic

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schools, join the Legion of Mary, become intimates of the clergy and of lay leaders and so forth. This is not only for the purpose of thorough-going espionage but also to sow dissension and disloyalty to Rome. One of the principal agencies in this dread work is the anti-Vatican "Catholic Patriotic Association." This organization recently held congresses in Chengtu and Lanchow. It has had a leading part in the trial of Bishop Tang of Canton, and has just now elected a new "bishop," Chen I-hsung, to replace him. The secret instructions outlined above were first for party members working among overseas Chinese; recently decreed also for Communist China itself, they are apparently being carried out to the letter.

FOWLER'S ENGLISH

THIS MONTH marks the one-hundredth anniversary of the birth of Henry W. Fowler, one of the few people who have gained a measure of immortality by telling others how to write better English. Although he produced several books, in part with the collaboration of his brother Francis, the book for which he is best known is *A Dictionary of Modern English Usage,* first published by Oxford University Press in 1926, when Fowler was sixty-eight years old. Over the years an increasing number of readers, writers, journalists, editors and proof-readers have come to use, enjoy and praise this unusual book.

Typical of such praise is this comment by the eminent stylist Evelyn Waugh: "The most valuable advice you can give young writers today is 'Learn your language! Keep Fowler's *Modern English Usage* at your elbow. You must own a copy.' "

Many other books on English usage have, of course, been published since Fowler's. Last year, for instance, Oxford University Press brought out Margaret Nicholson's *American-English Usage,* which is based on Fowler's book, and Bergen and Cornelia Evans produced *A Dictionary of Contemporary American Usage.* Both of these books have, for an American audience, the advantage of noting differences between American and English usage. And both, of course, are more up-to-date than Fowler's book, which was already slightly dated when it was published. Whatever the merits of these books, however, they will not replace Fowler. They may correct, modify or supplement his work but, at least for those who have been acquainted with Fowler's book, they can never replace it.

The reason for this does not lie in some sentimental or antiquarian attachment to the work of an endearing old man. Henry Fowler was learned, witty and incisive, and he had a sound feeling for the language. These qualities are evident throughout his book and it is unlikely that anyone could read several consecutive pages without being entertained and informed.

But in commending Fowler the best service one can do him is to quote. On "rules" which so tax the ingenuities of rigid grammarians, those governing the split infinitive and the final preposition, for instance, he has this to say:

"The English-speaking world may be divided into 1) those who neither know nor care what a split infinitive is; 2) those who do not know, but care very much; 3) those who know and condemn; 4) those who know and approve; and 5) those who know and distinguish."

"Those who lay down the universal principle that final prepositions are 'inelegant' are unconsciously trying to deprive the English language of a valuable idiomatic resource, which has been used freely by all our greatest writers except those whose instinct for English idiom has been overpowered by notions of correctness derived from Latin standards. The legitimacy of the prepositional ending in literary English must be uncompromisingly maintained."

He has much to say of abuses of the language which he groups under such descriptive terms as "battered ornaments," "elegant variations," "French phrases" and "working and stylish words." His attitude toward such abuses may be inferred from his statements about long and short words: " 'The better the writer, the shorter his words' would be a statement needing many exceptions for individual persons and particular subjects; but for all that it would, and especially about English writers, be broadly true. Those who run to long words are mainly the unskillful and tasteless; they confuse pomposity with dignity, flaccidity with ease, and bulk with form." And further: "It is a general truth that the short words are not only handier to use, but more powerful in effect; extra syllables reduce, not increase, vigor."

These are only several of the many bracing statements which are common in Fowler, and they are not here supported by the convincing and delightful examples with which he supports his opinions. But they are enough to indicate why those who care for the language they use should remember Henry W. Fowler and his work on the hundredth anniversary of his birth.

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Art and the Liturgy

Works of religious art are not of equal value liturgically, and when this fact is ignored, distortion of emphasis is almost certain to follow

by H. A. REINHOLD

ANYONE who discusses today the relation between art and the liturgy necessarily takes part in a debate which has deep historical roots, and in which differences of opinion and attitude are often extreme. Both orthodox and heretical thinkers, for instance, have maintained that the religion of Christ, or even others, like Islam, should be without image, especially where the divine is concerned. Within the Church there was, perhaps impelled by the Moslem neighborhood, the great iconoclastic upheaval in the Near East. The early Cistercians were rather sober and strict and left a record of an almost imageless church wherever they flourished. We need only mention Calvin to think of whitewashed churches all over Switzerland, where once had been a riot of paint, stained glass and statuary. Both our tradition and the Islamic go back, of course, to the great body of sacred law and of imageless epiphanies in the Old Testament. Where a person appears, the sacred texts make sure it is the *Malakh Yahweh,* the messenger or angel of the Lord. The infinite God, pure Spirit, cannot be circumscribed or housed by man's work; not even His "infinite" creation is His garment, image or abode. He is beyond and dwells in inaccessible light, as the Scriptures say.

While God has used angels and human messengers to reveal his infinite Being, at one time in history He spoke Himself and the Word He spoke was made flesh as the "Image of the Father" and the "Reflection of His Glory." Thus was the Man Jesus born under the Caesar Augustus in a hidden place, so human that Judas had to kiss Him to point Him out to the mob that took Him prisoner.

When "creation-bound" idolatry was cast to the ground by the victory of Christianity after 33 A.D., there was no danger in giving in to the urge to represent Christ and His glorified members, but it is interesting to observe how this was done, not only in the stricter East but even where Eastern thought had only passing influence, as in Sicily. There the cathedrals of Monreale and Cefalù still show images that are far from the wrathful old man with the white beard of Michelangelo, Dürer and their contemporaries. God the Father remains invisible, but He is transparent in the "reflection of His Glory and His Image," the Son who appears as the Pantocrator, the Ruler of All: majestic, stern and lordly. "Philip, he who sees me, sees the Father," was Jesus' answer to the apostle who wanted to "see" the Father.

In his book on Mary, Père Yves Congar makes a telling distinction between the concept of vertical revelation familiar in the Calvinistic tradition and the horizontal revelation of our own tradition, which is one of perfect and complete incarnation, of a visible Church, of symbolic sacrifice and sacraments, of a God elevating and entering into His creation. This horizontal impact of the Incarnation came to its perfection in Jesus, complete man and complete God. And here lies the basis not only of the organized and visible Church, of the liturgy, of theology, but also of art, if only it is kept in mind at all times that we must remain within the realm of symbol and that art must in the religious sphere always carry the message of mystery and the shadow of an unseen and unseeable reality. Vertical revelation is hostile to all involvement of the divine in creation and therefore to representative art, while the horizontal concept of revelation is in danger of losing its awe and dread of the majesty of God. Man has been struggling with this dialectic from the beginning, as many of our churches, both past and present, will testify.

Father Reinhold, a frequent contributor, is a well-known leader of the Liturgical Movement. His *The American Parish and The Roman Liturgy* was recently published by Macmillan.

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APART from lofty speculation we meet practical problems. Even when there are real accomplishments within this dialectic—when the divine is artistically represented in a manner which takes fitting account of its religious character—distortion and abuse are still possible. For works of religious art are not of equal value liturgically. When this fact is ignored, some distortion of emphasis is almost certain to follow, as a few examples will make clear.

A friend of mine once introduced me to a painter, because he thought very highly of a job he had just then finished in a new church—a set of very prominent stations of the cross. He described them to me as truly "liturgical." We went forthwith to the new church, where they occupied indeed a prominent place. As a matter of fact, they were the outstanding feature and very handsome at that. When I was asked for my frank opinion, I had to counter with a question: why did they deserve the description "liturgical"? Was there anything in their execution that made them more akin to the liturgy than other stations? Are stations of the cross, whatever their artistic merits may be, and in whatever style they may be executed, to be given such a prominent place? Should they be the most impressive feature of a church of any description?

After all, the stations are a popular devotion, not a part of the sacramental liturgy of the Church. They are ancillary and supplementary to the liturgy proper. They are the more liturgical in any church the more they occupy their proper place, which is not one of prominence. Their meditative and historical character, something to be kept in mind not only by the architect, but by the faithful as well, is clearly distinct from the symbolical and sacramental character of the liturgy: we deal with the real, sacramental presence of the Passion of Our Lord in the Holy Eucharist, but we have a presence "in mind only" when we deal with popular devotion. A piece of art work seems to be the more liturgical the more it makes its true place visible and takes the rank in the hierarchy of liturgical or devotional values which becomes it.

On another occasion I was taken to a new "liturgical" church, quite modern in design. Its most prominent features were a large Pietà behind the enormous main altar and a combination tabernacle-exposition throne behind it. It also had very vividly colored stained glass windows representing the mysteries of the rosary. Why was this church entitled to the term "liturgical"? Was the liturgy really its inspiration, or did it serve the liturgy especially well?

There have been a few sensational pieces of church architecture in recent years which startled through their novelty and the unusual features incorporated in them. One of these is the—ever-recurring—altar in the physical dead center of the church, so that "all can see everything," as one of the descriptive articles put it. If seeing were all the spirit of the liturgy required of participation, this might have been a good solution, provided we don't mind getting a different view from every angle of the circle. But the liturgy is *not* a show to be taken in solely by the eyes. After the restoration of the Holy Week in 1956, it has become trivially obvious that the congregation has to outgrow the role of silent and mute spectators and assume an active role in the sacramental "play" which gives it a far more dramatic part than mere gazing at a sacred pageant would. The congregation is truly the living Body of Christ, in which the priest represents the Head and the faithful the members: therefore, that church building is the more liturgical which facilitates the realization of these supernatural facts. The building and the furnishings which are apt to give the Church assembled the experience and the feeling of oneness, of sacramental union with Christ, with the action as it proceeds, with the priest, with one another, make up a liturgical church, whether it is an ancient church building in one of the historical styles, a pseudo-historical imitation, or a radically modern building of glass, steel and concrete.

But there is a reservation in this statement. A church building that does not speak the stylistic language of the age in which it is built is, for another reason, less liturgical: it is suspect of escapism by using a style that is dead and breathes only by artificial respiration as it stems from textbooks of architectural history. In other words, a liturgical church and its furnishings must be contemporary, as liturgy in its very essence as a sacramental reality is present, not as a meditation projecting itself back into history or legend. It demands that we face our own "now and today," not yesterday and the past. This does not mean that true witnesses of history, ancient basilicas and Gothic cathedrals or Baroque shrines, are less liturgical than a modern church. On the contrary, they bring out the fact that we are, in sacramental life, one with our own past. This is completely different from the willful and deliberate adoption of a style which here and now is of the past and dead. These are two entirely different things, which are best expressed by opposing the terms history and historicism, tradition and archaism.

TASTE, atmosphere, custom and misconceived "tradition" (which should be called "habit" instead) are often invoked by Catholics, when called upon to judge a new church building or its furnishings. We take refuge in likes and dislikes, and these reactions are largely conditioned by habit and memory. Taste is too vague and too individual to serve as a criterion for judgment of a building that is meant to serve a congregation: *de gustibus non est disputandum.* Nor is "churchy" atmosphere anything that could be used as a yardstick in an intelligent discussion of the merits

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of a new house for the Catholic liturgy and private or public devotion. A cavelike, dimly lit interior, full of beloved objects of memory or devotion might have a certain appealing and warm atmosphere, but it makes people come to contradictory conclusions. For one may call it pious, while the other may reject it as stuffy. We must also remember that the real tradition in art and architecture of our Church is constant *change,* not repetition. The dialectic we have mentioned takes place in time and is sensitive to changing conditions. If this were not so, we would still build basilicas, and Notre Dame de Paris and St. Peter's in Rome would not delight our eyes. No style has been canonized by the Church, even though historical styles may fill us with nostalgia after so much greatness and faith, or they may show greater mastery in their idiom than we will ever be able to produce when expressing ourselves before the unspeakable mystery of the living God. Respect for the past should never paralyze our artistic faculties and discourage us from trying to form the visualized prayer of our own generation.

The best church from the point of view of the liturgy is a building which gives the optimal conditions for the correct performance of this same liturgy. While that may seem too obvious to sift the chaff from the wheat, its application will show us that this is not as evident as it seems to be at first reading. The liturgy strictly speaking is any kind of Mass, baptism, wedding, vespers and compline, to mention only those liturgical services which may occur in a parish or in the chapel of a school. In the light of the great reforms of Pius XII, we can therefore say that ordered, well-defined and articulate participation in these sacramental parts of worship is the first concern of an architect who builds for a parish: the semi-liturgical functions, like benediction, rosary in common, stations of the cross and novenas, will be taken care of by the requirements for the liturgy as they are all extensions or approximations of it. It is, therefore, not only necessary that all participants can see well enough to be able to share in the worship at the altar, but there must be such an arrangement of sanctuary and pews that all can hear well and have the feeling that they are a part of the Rite at the altar.

Gothic vaults and dim, dark aisles may be conducive to awe and silent meditation, but that is definitely not what communal worship like the Mass requires above all: the shape of the floor plans must be such as to give the assembled congregation a feeling of oneness and of belonging to this concrete Church, *ecclesia,* as the apostles belonged to the group gathered around the Supper table with Our Lord. A church too large, too complicated, or in any other way leading to splinter-group formation, may be a masterpiece of design, may have all the "atmosphere" one could wish for, but it is definitely not a church for the liturgy of mid-twentieth century Christians who are already swallowed up by oversized social groups and anonymity—the last thing to bring to the Eucharistic banquet table, our altar.

Another requirement is simplicity and clearness of design. In the first place, we ought not to indulge in medieval dreams of ambition. Our people are all migrants, pilgrims, and cannot afford to build temples of gigantic proportions. We do not know whether or not this is going to be the permanent state of mankind, but most people are migratory in these days and neighborhoods change as fast as we can build. While a modern parish church should be dignified in its simplicity and its uncluttered clarity, a certain sparseness and frugality will give the best background for the essential function of the sacred edifice, the sacred rite performed by the wandering Church.

Naturally there should be no pretense and vain show of wealth. The asceticism and otherworldliness of our faith will not be expressed by "period tricks" conjuring up "heaven" in design or precious material. The contrast with secularism is certainly not brought out by pseudo-Gothic cathedrals, but by the discipline and the frugality of the essentials. The fat and sleek buildings which were erected to be known as "three-million-dollar" St. Paphnutius or Cunigunda are not only wrongly conceived for an age of plenty, but are mostly in bad taste artistically. The center of the liturgy is such simple things as bread, wine, water and the plain and unadorned words. Shall we suffocate them and smother them with precious stones and metals?

BREAD, wine, oil, water, light and gesture and word are not only the staff of the sacred symbol called sacrament, but they include the first ingredients of all art. There are always, as Romano Guardini proved forty years ago, elements of play in the liturgy. These elements are representative of cosmic as well as supernatural rhythms. They must remain faint against the primary purpose of worship, *kerygma* and sacred action, but they must be there. Art in all its forms is their vehicle and therefore religious art has a profound responsibility not to trifle, not to become irrelevant, not to sacrifice its noble purpose to the conception of appeal, enjoyment and the more telluric urges of religious and pseudo-religious man.

Why should a discriminating teacher or priest or statesman tolerate Hummel alongside Duccio, Fugel next to El Greco and Lambert-Rucki embarrassed by the neighborhood of a serially cast and painted statue? Even those who have no natural sense for art in all its forms and its history can be educated as long as they want to learn, by the simple device of contrasting masterpieces, genuine folk art and all that springs forth from true religious and artistic inspiration with the product of debased commercialism.

Of late much has been written about a "sacramental

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view of the universe." This phrase is meaningful only if the word sacrament is used in a derived sense, meaning that it becomes a symbol of sanctification for men and a sign of God's will to save it. More than this, it can mean that man's arts are able to do for the whole of the universe, at least analogically, what the Holy Ghost does for the matters which constitute the visible signs of grace. The Church has recognized this by extending in her Ritual the realm of blessing and consecration to the elemental things and services of daily life and events, like birth, sickness and nourishment, which by themselves are natural, even animal, to embrace them with her consecratory task. What could be more spiritualizing than the arts, a union of matter and spirit imprinting the seal of forming spirit on inert stuff? By analogy, man does, therefore, not only imitate and symbolize here the Creator, but shares, again in an analogical, not a proper, way in the elevating power of Redemption; with this in mind, who would trifle with religious subjects in art and ignore its God-related character?

THE ARTISTIC work of architects, sculptors, painters, glaziers and mosaicists must, therefore, serve the sacred mysteries, not dominate them. Their work has the purpose of either serving the sacramental actions or of calling forth devotion. In a church which primarily serves the purpose of sacramental re-presentation, the central mysteries of Christ and His redemptive work need artistic expression. All else has to take a back seat. And since the Church serves sacramental mystery, naturalistic and historicistic art would contradict its very spirit.

These general observations are broad enough to leave creative genius sufficient room and yet are definite in their effort to set our age off against the immediate and more remote past. What we can learn from Rheims, Moissac and "il Gesu" in Rome has nothing to do with eclectic borrowing of details. They spoke the language of their day, now forever echoed away in the ruins of history. What we can and must preserve and reawaken is the faith and dedication that created these marvels without imitating their forms.

There is no liturgical style, because the liturgy has survived dozens of styles, some more, some less adequate to capture the spirit of its functions and its meaning. No one of them has been a perfect vehicle of it, as each spoke the idiom of its contemporaries. Neither can we ourselves escape this condition, nor should we want to do so. Each age is open to God and receives Him in its own contemporary way. The tortured, searching and flesh-involved man of our complex mental climate, threatened by social, economic, political and other conforming giants, removed from the rhythms of nature so familiar to our ancestors, will certainly use other means of expression than medieval or Baroque man. As long as our contemporary artist realizes that liturgy is truly chaste, frugal, sober, spiritual, is not arbitrary allegory but symbol, and does not indulge in historicism, he has but to follow this inspiration to create the means for better *leiton ergon,* the work of the people, *liturgia.*

Sacred Art Today

"There is an unfortunate cult of nostalgic idolatry which counts past forms as the only forms"

by ROBERT E. RAMBUSCH

SACRED ART in America must be viewed in its developing historical context. At its inception the United States had a Protestant religious climate. Then, in the mid-nineteenth century, waves of immigration brought to America masses of German and Irish Catholics, but it was too late to affect the established religious climate, and each successive group was driven into its national Catholic ghetto. Subsequent Italian and middle-European immigrants interpreted this pattern as the established one for Catholics, and the Catholic minority in the United States became, for the most part, an agglomeration of various national groups, linked by their common religious belief and Americanized by education.

European Catholic immigrants in the nineteenth century, principally of proletarian and peasant origin, sought in America the betterment of working and living conditions. Rather than planting or sharing the cultural

Mr. Rambusch, whose own work in Christian art is well known, makes his first appearance in The Commonweal.

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heritage which had existed in Europe, they rejected their national backgrounds as they became Americanized, and accepted without question the bourgeois standards they saw around them. Nevertheless, despite the conscious rejection of European folkways, their visual frame of reference remained rooted in the art and architecture of their homeland. The transplanted Italian tradition was one of Renaissance exuberance; the German and middle-European one of unbridled romanticism. The Irish, coming from a Catholic nation without a real religious visual culture, developed eclectic tastes.

The great period of Catholic growth, financial betterment and church construction, occurring as it did at the end of the nineteenth century, was inevitably one of artistic sterility. The character of American sacred art and architecture was determined by the taste of its clerical patrons, and the churches still extant, unconsciously accepted as traditional American Catholic models by present-day Catholics, represent the canons of immigrant taste.

Catholic higher education has had little impact on the formation of Catholic artists, who, for competency in this field, must generally depend on good secular training. Charismatic grace in the case of the artist builds on a foundation of natural competence, but the art curriculum of most Catholic colleges prescinds from the human form in any except a moral context, and encourages calligraphy at the expense of an integrated artistic training. The commercial sources of religious art are theoretically in a position to commission truly creative artists to serve the Church, and occasionally they do. But the commercial firms fall short of their responsibility in direct proportion to their failure to elevate the taste of laity and clergy.

THE CATHOLIC with nineteenth century vision will often find the new religious art forms meaningless, because he has been educated to accept the old forms as eternal forms expressing eternal truths. The general distrust and dislike of modern art can also be related to a dislike of the so-called liturgical art. This may be due to an inadequate knowledge of the liturgy or the conviction that liturgical art is esoteric in comparison to a devotional art which prompts facile sensual gratification, this last a legacy of the Baroque tradition. Baroque realism became more saccharine in the Romantic period and has now disintegrated into sentimentality, coupled occasionally with irrelevant scientific exactitude. (The re-construction of Christ's physical appearance from the Shroud of Turin as an end in itself implies no reference to Christ as the Incarnate Word.) Often our art is novena, and not liturgical, art. As it tends to be more and more peripheral to the central mysteries of our Faith, piety becomes vacuous. Devotion to the Sacred Heart, for instance, has as its visual form an effeminate transcription of a private revelation rather than a visual reflection of the tremendous theological content implied in God's Incarnate Love.

Pope Leo XIII in his labor encylical regretted the Church's loss of the working man. The Church, once acclaimed the Mother of the Arts, might well lament her loss of the great artists and craftsmen. Father Terence O'Connor describes this schism, in *Theological Studies*. "In recent centuries . . . Christian art lost the force of its message (and that is the real damage), but at the same time it became poor art even from the esthetic point of view. It aimed at being not pertinent but pretty. There was much sweetness but little light." The artist has been driven out of the temple, and the religious goods merchant is ushered to the front pews. No longer are the churches enriched with hand-carved statues, the creative work of an artist, the expression of his idea in wood or stone. Churches are now stocked with catalogue figures, the impressions of a machine on inferior material. Church buildings do not respect the honest use of constructional material. Brick walls, veneered with plaster, are painted to simulate marble.

We should not exaggerate the importance of art's influence, but we should not minimize the fact that historically the dynamic periods of the Church engendered a significant and living art and the static periods a correspondingly inferior art. Today we are still slowly recovering from the effects of the nineteenth century, a low ebb in the expression of Christian art. And because of our nineteenth century eclectic nostalgia for the past, we have lost contact with contemporary art. Paleo-Christian, Byzantine, Romanesque and early Gothic art reflect genuinely the inner vitality of the Church. But the artists and architects who copy these archeological forms today are motivated more by nostalgia than creativity. These costly carbon copies lack the freshness of the originals, the daring inventive spirit of their creators, their message to the people of their times.

There is an unfortunate cult of nostalgic idolatry which counts past forms as the only forms, which seems contradictory to the Church's daily prayer for the renewal of the earth. Perhaps the artist's faith in his vocation to renew is the reason why the community feels it is being attacked by him. He challenges the status quo, the eclectic architecture, the accepted "popular Catholic art."

ON WHAT GROUNDS may one validly object to the "accepted" and "popular" Catholic art? One may object because it is a poor art and falsified Catholicism. It is poor art because of inferior design, craftsmanship, and color, the misuse and abuse of inferior materials. Theological truths are often falsified, with great mysteries reduced to cuteness and sweetness. Instead of perpetuating "accepted" art and eclectic

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architecture, the Church must become again the patron of an original and significant art, expressive of eternal truths in a new and living idiom, that these truths may be meaningful to the men of our time.

Archbishop Ritter reminds us that "Surely it is not the tradition of the Church to be something static, or for the artists of our day serving religion to be confined to imitating the designs of past centuries. No matter how much we may prefer Gothic, Byzantine, and Roman architecture, it would be wrong and unnatural to think that the artists of our day have no ideas of their own . . . that our age is so barren of ideas and inspiration that it must constantly go back to the past in art and architecture. How will our own age give expression to its spirit unless the Church affords the opportunity to the artist, and unless the artist himself be provided with the proper climate to function as a normal person of our day?"

The glory of the Church is that she contains the answer to the changing needs and circumstances of men. This newness implies as great a capacity of the modern man to find expression for these truths as the man of medieval days. Truth is eternal; so, transcendentally, is Beauty. God has blessed our age with many gifted artists, but what is required is an opportunity for them to speak to us.

The artist receives his creative gifts from God, and the non-artist's capacity for participating in the artist's work through understanding and appreciation is also God-given. But this capacity can be cultivated. "Beauty surely is 'that which is pleasing to the sight,' as St. Thomas had it; but," Father Boulogne points out, "the admiration it arouses is not necessarily immediate. To reserve the name of *beauty* exclusively for things that awaken enthusiasm at first glance is equivalent to making each man's personal taste the sole criterion of worth. . . . Our spontaneous acceptances and rejections depend upon the immediate agreement of what we see with our predilections, our habits, our mentality, and our education. Since these are all necessarily *limited* they are incapable of opening to us any aspects of beauty with which we are not already in tune."

The scholastic positions on Beauty and Knowledge are similar. Knowledge and Beauty are relative to the capacity of the receiver; we are not all endowed with the same capacity. Thomistically, "cognition is brought about by the presence of the known object in the knowing mind. But the object is in the knower after the fashion of his own knowledge." Paul Valéry reminds us that "the obscurity of a passage is the product of two factors: the thing read, and the being who reads it. The latter rarely blames himself." One must be something of a poet to appreciate poetry, something of an artist to appreciate art. Maritain observes that "the better informed the mind is of the rules, the methods and difficulties of art, and above all, of the end pursued by the artist and his intentions, the better it is prepared to receive by means of the intuition of the senses the intelligible splendor emanating from the work and so spontaneously to perceive and relish its beauty."

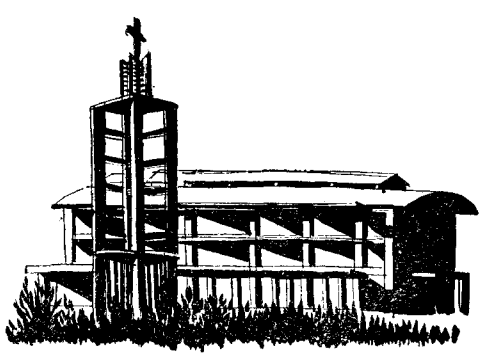
THERE CAN be extremes in art. Liturgical art that becomes too esoteric loses contact with the community and the Rite which it is created to serve. On the other hand, the art contrived only to appeal reduces the Sacred Mysteries to a level which is ignoble.

Religion is the binding of man and God, and art is a visual manifestation of this bond. The artist has a three-fold dialogue with God, the Church, and the community. The reciprocal regard of the artist, the Church, and the community can be seen in the artist's desire to unify and edify. According to Our Holy Father, "the work of art must be edifying: it must elevate the soul. . . . Through art, the senses can provide [the soul] with wings. . . . The winged soul can rise to lofty heights . . . and fly towards the eternal, the true, the beautiful, towards the only real wealth, towards the center, where union is made and unity achieved, towards God."

The beautiful is that which unites. Maritain says that "once you touch the beautiful, like a Dante, a Bach, or a Giotto, then contact is established and souls communicate." But one ought not mistake this true and exalted unity with the artist's compromise and pandering to the common taste. It is not for the artist to become public, but for the public to become artist-like. The unity is not a descent on the artist's part, but a united ascent of artist and community.

The art that is not capable of changing us and edifying us is not genuine Christian art. To say "I don't know anything about art, but I know what I like" means "I like the status quo and I do not wish to be changed or edified or united. Give me what I want." To demand nothing more than devotional art is to refuse to unite, to change, the refusal (as St. John of the Cross has expressed it) to throw ourselves out of ourselves.

"Art," one might say with Claudel, "is the world clamoring to become one city." Christian art is the world asking to become God's city.



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The Artist As Apostle

Christian art must spring from an outlook that is social rather than individualistic, virile and realistic rather than effeminate and emotional

by VINCENT J. HOPE

NOT FOR SEVERAL centuries has there been such serious interest in and discussion of church art in all its forms and styles as there is today. Even the little church goods stores now venture to display a Lambert-Rucki crucifix, a Dali or Rouault. True, there are still shoddy, assembly-line monstrosities that stifle instead of enkindling devotion. Yet, much as one may and should deplore this fact, there are unmistakable signs that a long sterile winter in art is over and a thaw has begun to herald a new spring. The laity, as well as religious, clergy and hierarchy, is beginning to become articulate on the subject of church architecture, statues and altars. In fact, much of the comment from the pews is more knowledgeable and tolerant of new trends than a good deal of the learned misinformation bandied about at clergy gatherings—such as that given me, for example, by one monk who told me in all seriousness that some of the new liturgical art was Communist-inspired, hatched in Moscow to undermine the Faith.

All this ferment is a welcome, healthy sign and bodes well for the beauty of God's house, in years to come if not for the present. Yet in a way it is also a reflection of the turmoil and critical probing going on in every phase of contemporary life. When one contemplates the chronic instability and turbulent changes that characterize our age, it is not fanciful to describe it in memorable phrases borrowed from Dawson's analysis of the fourteenth century: ". . . an age of profound social and spiritual change: an age of ruin and rebirth, of apocalyptic fears and mystical hopes." Some might even consider that an understatement for the world is in revolution today, in a "crisis of unity" as Cardinal Suhard put it, and no one can escape the impact of that crisis, thanks to the physical unity which technology has conferred on mankind.

It is not surprising, then, that Christian art is affected by this chaotic atmosphere and frenetic search for unity and peace. All the smug, bourgeois assumptions of the nineteenth century about inevitable progress have been forever shattered now, and along with them the suffocating stranglehold they had on religious art. As the Church finds itself faced by a world order in the process of dissolution and a new one struggling to be born, it will inevitably reject, as it has already begun to, art forms that symbolize a refusal to recognize vast changes in social, political and economic life, above all the rise of the proletariat to consciousness of their dignity and strength. (It is interesting, in this connection, to conjecture the sort of murals Diego Rivera might have painted if he had been acquainted with the radicalism of *Rerum Novarum* or *Quadragesimo Anno.)*

Christians whose immature, self-centered spirituality spawns a hankering after childish, sentimental themes in religious art cannot usually be counted on for much help in reconstructing the social order according to the mind of Leo XIII or Pius XI. They and their pious apathy, their penchant for the St. Sulpice, Barclay Street style have been roundly criticized since the days of Huysmans up to now by many authorities, so it is not necessary to repeat the process here. What has not so often been made clear is that their aversion for any and every new trend in Christian art and their rejection in practice of Catholic social principles stems from the same jaundiced point of view.

Conversely, those who are most intimately united with the mind of the Church, and today that means those keenly aware of their membership in the Mystical Body, those deeply imbued with the spirit of the liturgy and wholeheartedly committed to the lay apostolate, these not only welcome but are positively searching for a new embodiment of such ideals in architecture, statuary and painting. Generally speaking, what this generation of Catholics needs to have expressed for it in contemporary artistic terms is the Easter spirit of the glorified Christ, the joyous realization that the "state of siege" mentality has really been replaced by a more confident approach to the world and its problems, to which the only solution is to be found in Christ.

ANY ART which today aspires to fulfill the needs of the Christian community and to serve as the handmaid of divine worship must spring from an outlook that is social rather than individualistic, objective

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rather than subjective, virile and realistic rather than effeminate and emotional. It will aim at nourishing the ideals of those who have taken up the monumental task of laboring (as well as praying) to see that Our Father's will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In it there will be no room for shame or self-deception, for the enormity of mankind's anguish is too real and universal to be wished away by sentimental fancies in paint or stone or plaster.

In attempting this task, even the most talented artist will need great courage if he is to withstand the criticism he will encounter, often from the very ones who should encourage him the most. But he may derive some comfort from the example of the pioneers in the liturgical movement and in the cause of social reform who persevered so stubbornly a generation ago because they knew, as the artist should too, that time was on their side.

As an example, already we see a changing attitude towards new designs in architecture which aim to emphasize the concept of the church as a place of community worship, with the altar in clear, unobstructed view as a table of sacrifice, the focal point of the whole structure. Similar examples are to be found in sculpture, painting and metalwork. The members of at least one venturesome group of artists have found their experiments in decoration so well received that they cannot fill all the requests for their work. They and others like them find ample justification for their efforts in the words of Pius XII: "One cannot generally spurn and reject out of prejudice new forms and styles which are better adapted to the new material out of which they are fashioned" (*Mediator Dei*).

Artists today should also find some encouragement in a statement Dom Virgil Michel made twenty years ago: "The Christian artist, perhaps more than many another Christian, is always a lay apostle; he is *ex professo* an apostle of the liturgical spirit in his very vocation." He must be prepared to endure the slings and arrows of those intent on maintaining the status quo in art, as in everything else. This is particularly true in this country, for in America, as Tocqueville remarked a century ago, the democratic spirit tends to place a premium on an abundance of mediocre art to the detriment of works of quality. From the evidence available, the truth of Tocqueville's observation has not been greatly lessened by the developments of the last hundred years.

IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, what an artist needs to bear in mind is that the Church has never canonized any particular style or school of art, and in the nature of things never will. For it is not her province to do so, any more than it is to tie herself irrevocably to a feudal, monarchic or democratic form of government, or to the capitalist regime in economics. To quote from the encyclical *Mediator Dei* again, Pius XII wrote: ". . . it is altogether necessary to give a free hand to that contemporary art which, with due reverence and honor, serves the sacred places and rites. Thus it becomes possible for contemporary art also to join its voice to the admirable canticle of glory that the masters raised in the past centuries to the Catholic faith."

This means in practice that the artist is free to make use of all the new materials in his field and to avail himself of recently discovered techniques, so long as he maintains a spirit of reverence for his theme and of sincerity in expressing it. In fact, not only is he free but he has a certain obligation to do so if he is to remain faithful to his time and not shut himself up in sterile contemplation of the past. Being a man as well as an artist, he cannot help but feel the anguish and tensions of this revolutionary epoch, just as his less gifted fellowmen do. But with this difference: he must strive as best he can to transcend in his work the ephemeral and accidental elements of the age in order to reveal the idealism and beauty buried beneath the ugliness and vulgarity of our technological age. Where, for example, men are weighed down by the impersonalism of industry and the barren repulsiveness of its structures, an artist can try to discover the hidden element of humanity in their milieu and to point the path to a more humane and personal use of soulless techniques. He must be completely immersed in his time, while always remembering that new materials and skills are neither good nor evil, but simply indifferent, awaiting the love of one who will breathe spirit into them.

Thus a church of poured concrete, a statue of aluminum or stations of twisted wire are no less capable of serving the sacred places and rites than the same objects fashioned of bronze or marble. With works such as these the Christian artist may begin to erect a bridge between some of the lifeless achievements of modern technology and the age-old themes of man's Fall and Redemption. Over that bridge men will joyfully walk, in the glad knowledge that their time has its own contribution to make to the endless chant of praise that ascends to the throne of God from all creation.

The laborious but noble task of the artist today is to discover goodness and beauty in the depersonalized productions of our time and to enhance and enlarge them until he exorcizes the incidental ugliness. Then whatever he does, no matter how it may suffer by comparison with masterpieces of bygone ages, will possess the overwhelming advantage that it lives and speaks to the weary men of our time in an accent they understand. They will be grateful, and he himself may leave to future ages to decide what place he deserves in the long history of Christian art.

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THE SCREEN

DESIRE, DESIRE EVERYWHERE

TWO NEW MOVIES which stem from the works of leading American authors have striking similarities in spite of the great difference in their locales. Both "Desire Under the Elms," based on Eugene O'Neill's play, and "The Long Hot Summer," deriving from William Faulkner's *The Hamlet,* have a certain universality of theme: passion is passion wherever you find it; sons and daughters will rebel against their fathers; and aging fathers, no matter how determined to prove their prowess, are mainly interested in the continuity of life and blood line.

Eugene O'Neill would probably have been pleased with the film made from his play, which was set in nineteenth century New England. Although scriptwriter Irwin Shaw added a prologue, changed Ephraim's new wife from American Abbie to Italian immigrant Anna (so Sophia Loren could play the role), and dropped O'Neill's over-use of dialect, he has on the whole stuck rather closely to the play. And Don Hartman's production, beautifully photographed in black and white, has caught the spirit of the original. At first the old New England house and the other dark, forbidding sets seem too theatrical for movie techniques, but as the powerful drama draws the viewer into its tragic story, the gloomy settings fit the mood perfectly.

"Desire Under the Elms" concentrates on three people who make up a strange triangle. Each of them is at first looking out only for himself: the land-loving father, as hard as the rocks he moves to improve his farm; his lusty Italian wife, who wants at last a home of her own; and her angry, grasping young stepson, who's determined to make the farm his own. The angles keep shifting. The wife and stepson, hating each other at first, fall into a trap of passion and then of love. After Anna's baby is born, Eben, the son, realizes he is trapped again because Ephraim thinks of himself as the father and plans to leave the farm to his new son. And, hoping to regain Eben's love, Anna smothers the baby.

This is obviously strong material for a movie, but it is very well played: Burl Ives is somewhat mannered and theatrical as the vigorous, domineering father, but appropriate to the plot and setting. Sophia Loren and Anthony Perkins, using a more cinematic style, are more realistic as the young lovers caught in a passion that leads to their downfall. Director Delbert Mann has handled his difficult assignment well and with good taste. While "Desire Under the Elms" is a trifle arty as a movie, it also has warmth and tragic dignity. Although its subject matter is sensational, its themes are presented thoughtfully and in a manner to give thinking audiences greater understanding.

I DON'T KNOW whether William Faulkner would like the movie made from *The Hamlet.* The first part of the script, written by Irving Ravetch and Harriet Frank, Jr., is exceedingly good and has considerably more humor than Faulkner usually puts into his books. Although the writers had difficulty in carrying on their story after they started so well with the many characters and themes, "The Long Hot Summer" is extremely interesting, and its somewhat pat ending by no means spoils it.

Once again a blustering and determined father pushes his children around. The role is played to perfection by Orson Welles, whose enormous size fits the characterization to a T. In fact, all the actors, under Martin Ritt's direction, turn in vivid portraits: Joanne Woodward as the rebellious daughter; Anthony Franciosa as the son who'd like to rebel but doesn't have the gumption; Lee Remick as the flashy daughter-in-law who's not adverse to flaunting her well-built body; Angela Lansbury as the mistress who's determined to push Welles into marriage. And then there are the two young men outside of the immediate family circle, one of whom the bossy old father would like to have in the family as a son-in-law. He's not too particular which one, since he deplores the fact that eligible, attractive Joanne is twenty-three and still unmarried. Richard Anderson does as well as he can with the role of the neighbor who has been courting Joanne for years, but the role is inconclusive. Paul Newman as the newcomer, an ambitious young man with a reputation for setting fire to barns, is fairly bursting with vitality, and he proves even more than a match for Papa.

The story focuses on Newman, who comes to this town in Mississippi where Papa is the whole show. He starts out as a sharecropper, then becomes storekeeper for Papa and then prospective son-in-law—much to the annoyance of high-spirited Joanne and her weak-willed, jealous brother. Needless to say, all this is played with a great deal of gusto and flamboyance, perhaps with a touch of "Baby Doll." But the picture has a point, and it shows a way of life in the hot, deep South. Jerry Wald's production, with lovely photography in DeLuxe Color and CinemaScope of the Southern locales, is first-rate. I wish, however, that someone could have persuaded the good cast not to lay their deep Southern accents on quite so heavily. At times the film almost needs sub-titles. But the themes are universal, and while they are not always pleasant they are treated for the most part with honesty and realism. An adult audience won't have any trouble understanding this version of desire under the magnolias.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

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THE STAGE

A QUESTION OF REALITY II

MR. WILLIAM INGE, with "The Dark at the Top of the Stairs" (*at the Music Box*) and Mr. Morton Wishengrad, in "The Rope Dancers" *(at the Henry Miller),* would seem to embody two recurrent attitudes of the American artist *vis-à-vis* the position of reality in art. Mr. Inge, of course, assumes a posture of closeness to the prose minutiae, and his value lies in that conviction of sincerity, fidelity of tender observation, which supports his gentle statements. Mr. Wishengrad, alternatively, is indifferent to anything like systematic actuality or coherence; it is a poetic vehemence, darkly beating, upon which his imagination insists. Vastly differing, each dramatist seeks out reality with his separate compass; paradoxically, both arrive at a vision of the imperfection of human life, of the need for solacing love and self-wisdom. To affirm that truth, the fable of each play demands the literal sacrifice of a victim; to anchor it, both invoke the authority of sexual psychology and symbolism. Yet neither drama comes into a final, impersonal reality, and for reasons which are polar: Mr. Inge because he will not pass beyond public fantasy; Mr. Wishengrad because he is locked within private will.

What Kafka imaged in the magisterial castle, and Melville with his mocking, ancient beast, Mr. Inge sees as a dark passage, summoning, yet an image of fear. It is a domestic, not to say childish, figure, and modestly avows the dramatist's sensibility, his homely discretion. Elsewhere, Mr. Inge has dilated it with a scrupulous attention almost reverent: no one would wish to forget the terrible tattiness of his mooning housewife in "Little Sheba," her wistful gaieties with the postman, those dumb, broken offerings of love and the careful tending of its ashes. Yet each of these subsequent plays has seemed an echoing variation on that earliest image of resonant pathos: they present the odd spectacle of a man rehearsing tiny, desolate fantasies of love and acceptance and need with a proficiency which solaces his audience as much as it seems to mark some deep personal insistence of his own. In the matter of Mr. Inge, this audience aspect is primary: not only is he, without qualification, the most commercially successful American playwright of his generation, still more, his work provokes in the theater a benign complacency, a glad, even vulgar, acquiescence which no other dramatist may command. The root of this phenomenon is vexedly obscure, passing as it does beyond the competence of criticism: must one think it lies in Mr. Inge's tapping of some unconscious national mechanism of fear and assurance, and his projection of that on the scale of public fantasy?

Mr. Morton Wishengrad ostensibly indulges neither himself nor his audience. "The Rope Dancers" is all fierce knowing and masochism, a torment of emotional rhetoric washing down the sluice of hated truth. May one suggest, however, that Mr. Wishengrad's indulgence is of an idea of art as personal will so insistent as to abolish the possibility of any kind of reality? "The Rope Dancers" explores its life with supremely more vigilance and rage than "The Dark at the Top of the Stairs," and the poetic design imposed on it is altogether richer in density, in scope and reference. Yet for a work so determined to resist the smears of the easily false, it is void almost wholly of the authentic. As a variously diluted Irishman, I found its racial images and sense of life—one speaks now of speech rhythms and motivations, of Irish reticences and conscious needs and resources—seriously preposterous. Mr. Wishengrad has not achieved the universal, and he has certainly not defined the particular; what he offers rather—always, it is true, with private passion—are certain motifs invoked from pathology and literature and racial evidence, clothed in a fable which can never do more than symbolize. The symbol we admit: what we deny is the reality beyond it.

"The Rope Dancers" is thus a characteristic product of modern culture, issuing as it does out of mind and will, and not out of a sense of life fed by those. It is a cautionary tale of the dangers of willful ambition, as "The Dark at the Top of the Stairs" is a commentary on the toll of willful limitation. One grieves, most of all, for thinking of the sober care, thought, labor after ideal truth, which have been summoned to evoke only such fundamental incoherence. And nothing affirms this dramatic chaos more than the absence, from "The Rope Dancers," of any irrelevant stuff of life: so irrefrangible is the mesh of its intellectual design that nothing—neither light nor juice nor air—is admitted or released. One remembers Edith Wharton questioning Henry James on the omission, from his later novels, of any of the strands, tags, debris or experience we trail through life: why had he cut them out? "My dear," came the reply, with stricken poise, "I didn't know I had."

It would be fruitful, had I space, to say something of the various uses of Freudian authority in these plays: Mr. Inge's prurient timidity, Mr. Wishengrad's dark rhetoric and racial forces. To both dramatists, one might commend Mr. Lionel Trilling in *Freud and*

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Literature: "No view of life to which the artist responds can insure the quality of his work, but the poetic qualities of Freud's own principles, which are so clearly in the line of the classic tragic realism, suggest that this is a view which does not narrow and simplify the human world for the artist but on the contrary opens and complicates it." The Freudian psychology is not merely an available motif, nor a condiment, nor a nightstick to enforce acquiescence, nor even a structural brace. It must be always, and only, a characeristic detail made to appear as a vital phenomenon in an otherwise created tissue of life. To do less, or more, is to fail in the intelligent, not to say deserved, disposition of a theme.

RICHARD HAYES.

COMMUNICATIONS

"SOMEWHERE THERE'S MUSIC"

Runnemede, N. J.

TO THE EDITORS: I have not read *Somewhere There's Music,* by George Lea, but that is unimportant. What I am concerned with here is the puerile polemic against its subject matter as offered by Mr. Morris Philipson in the February 7 issue.

If Mr. Philipson were anything but the cloistered reactionary indicated by his review, the reading of such a book should have stirred his interest to examine the avenues on which the drug addict or jazz musician feels he must trod. That Mr. Philipson has not made any effort in this direction is indicated by his careless linking of jazz with "rock and roll and popular music," plus his unsubstantiated claim that the first is as "shallow" as the other two musical forms.

One could never experience the futile frenzy of Van Gogh's attempts to paint sunlight by simply reading about them. Likewise, no one can logically reject or accept jazz by simply reading about it. Novels such as *Somewhere There's Music,* or *The Hot and the Cool* or *The Man with the Golden Arm,* etc., can only give the amateur a hazy idea of the dark cellar of our society into which jazz is thrust, forgotten and left for dead. All of the adjectives in all of these works could not realistically recreate even a four-bar phrase of jazz.

Mr. Philipson states, "hundreds of thousands of young men and women are addicted to drugs, drunkenness, to violence and to jazz," thereby equating the same deleterious qualities of the three other admittedly noxious facets of our society with jazz. I would not suggest that he subject himself to a fixer's needle in order to gain empirical insight into the drug addict's problems, nor that he go on a fortnight's bender to achieve compassion for the alcoholic, nor that he blackjack anyone on a dark street to experience whatever twisted esthetics may be found in executed violence.

But, having a fondness for jazz myself—at the same time recognizing myself as a non-drug addict, a relatively non-alcoholic and a subscriber to Gandhi's philosophy of *satyagraha* where violence is concerned—I must recommend that Mr. Philipson extend the courtesy of listening to some jazz before writing it off, along with drinks, drugs, and violence, as an anathema of twentieth century Americana. . . .

Of course there is a connection between drinks, drugs and jazz. Jazz was born of a drinks-drugs-violence environment. And though it has struggled to extricate itself, we have kept it there; we have relegated it to dingy jazz rooms in vice-ridden areas; we have made it an unwanted thing because of its background. We are too proud, too pedantic, too stuffed with our own dogmatic sophistry to even think of examining it apart from its background; to examine it as an individual entity. We are convinced that all jazz is bad simply because it sprang from an unwholesome family. Therefore, it is hardly worth our precious attention, our understanding, or our tolerance.

It is like the Negro, about whom many comment, "Look at how he lives—in squalor, doing menial tasks," without the slightest realization that we force the Negro to live in such a manner by restricting him to the slum areas of our cities and by subtly barring him from more worthwhile jobs. This oppression does not make the Negro race an inferior one. . . .

It is just possible that jazz music may be the one honest, beautiful statement to emerge from the ugly environment of drinks, drugs and violence, if we will only give it a chance by listening to it.

Before condemning it as shallow, he should deliver himself to a few jazz rooms and LISTEN to the music; he should buy several records or attend a jazz appreciation course. He should devote attention to the music of Thelonious Monk, Lennie Tristano, Charlie Parker, Miles Davis, or the M.J.O., to name a few of the moderns. He should consider the swingsters such as the Benny Goodman Sextet, Benny Carter, Lionel Hampton or Teddy Wilson. He might expose himself to a bit of the neo-classical stuff by Matty Matlock, Pee Wee Russell or Turk Murphy and the early things of Tommy Ladnier, Willie Smith, Fats Waller, J. P. Johnson and the boys. To this jazz stew he should add the spice of several of the big bands, Kenton, Herman, Basie, or Ellington. . . .

Since the old testimonial is always a good crutch to lean on, I would refer Mr. Philipson to the many pro-jazz comments of intellectuals not directly connected with jazz such as Leonard Bernstein, Father Norman O'Connor of Boston, Igor Stravinsky, Darius Milhaud and Eugene Ormandy. Furthermore, if Mr. Philipson

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wants to read about jazz, there are several quite intelligent men within the jazz world who have written analytically in its favor. These include Leonard Feather, Barry Ulanov, Nat Hentoff, Paul Edouard Smith, Hughes Panassie, and Marshall Stearns. . . .

AL MATTERN.

"THE VISION OF CHRISTOPHER DAWSON"

New York, N.Y.

TO THE EDITORS: Surely the suggestion in Mr. Belgrave's letter [Jan. 24] that we should be "enthusiastically committed to our time" is a very strange one to be made by a Christian at any time.

The idea that Mr. Dawson wishes us to be committed to the middle ages or to any other period of history is totally untrue: in all his books he sees the Christian, as St. Paul sees him, on pilgrimage towards that Jerusalem which is above. Also like St. Augustine he realizes that only in the world to come will the City of God and the City of Man be fully distinguishable: here on earth the elements are still mixed, the cities are still in the building, "love of God" setting the stones in the one, "love of self" in the other.

To appreciate a Christian culture, even if like all human cultures it is imperfect, to learn something of the splendors of our past would appear to most Catholics a desirable aim. And it no more involves despising the values of our own age than it did when Clement of Alexandria, St. Augustine or Cassiodorus saved after their various fashions the ancient Greek and Roman cultures, to integrate the best of them in a culture fundamentally Christian and Catholic. I should be proud to be joined with such men on a list to which the name of Christopher Dawson really belongs and which Mr. Belgrave can surely not label "infamous."

MAISIE WARD SHEED.

BOOKS

Random Events and Random Characters

I LIKE IT HERE. By Kingsley Amis. Harcourt. $3.75.

By SAM HYNES

THE MAIN trouble with Kingsley Amis' new book is that it is his third, and not his first novel. To the reader coming to Amis for the first time, *I Like It Here* will seem to fall naturally into the class of novels one gives to people going on long, dull voyages, or into the hospital—amusing, unpretentious entertainment that demands no particular effort of the reader. But to anyone who has read *Lucky Jim*, that almost perfect comic novel, or *That Uncertain Feeling*, the new Amis is bound to be a disappointment. Amis' admirers—both those who regard him as the leader of a serious new literary movement and those who see him more as a fish-and-chips Waugh—will find precious little in this book to nourish their admiration.

I Like It Here is less a novel than a series of farcical incidents loosely tied to a travel narrative. An English journalist, his wife, and their three children go to Portugal on a holiday. While there the journalist does a job of literary detection, tries to write a play, gets drunk, gets amorous, and gets stung by a hornet (of these events only the last two have much relation to each other). Only the literary detective bit (which echoes in a farcical way *The Aspern Papers*) is a complete action; the rest have the distracting aimlessness of form that life has and novels, presumably, shouldn't have.

Through these random events move random characters—writers and tourists and motor-bike riders who appear and disappear without apparent necessity, often through what seems no more than literary absent-mindedness. The general effect is rather like the conversation of a very amusing drunk-funny, but not entirely coherent.

Like all good comic writers, Amis has serious things to say in his novels, and this one, like the previous two, is satire and social criticism as well as farce. Amis' position is once more a bemused left-of-center anti-intellectualism; the object of his satire is, as previously, the infinite variety of ways in which human beings can contrive to be phony. But whereas the two earlier books, perhaps because of their narrow provincial situations, managed to focus their attacks, this one blasts in all directions, and with considerably less effect.

In the course of *I Like It Here* Amis, or to be precise his hero, Garnet Bowen, manages to disapprove of Frank Sinatra, Antibes, Italian art, bullfighting, homosexuals, Americans, mothers-in-law, Charles Morgan, foreigners, travel writers, Henry James, lady book-reviewers, and Welshmen (this is only a hasty sampling). Some of these dislikes provide very funny passages (the parody of Henry James, for example, or the account of Bowen lecturing on the English novel to a foreign audience); the mother-in-law routine, on the other hand, is as old as "Who was that lady I saw you with?" and just about as funny. One can't help feeling that a comic novelist who tells mother-in-law jokes through an entire book isn't trying very hard.

The style of *I Like It Here* supports the conclusion that it is simply a top-of-the-head book. In his first two novels Amis demonstrated a fine ear—for the absurdities of conversational phoniness (he was es-

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pecially good at academic and artsy-craftsy inanities), and perhaps even more for the interior monologue of the ordinary sensual male. Jim Dixon *(Lucky Jim)* and his later counterpart, John Lewis are, like all good comic characters, exaggerated and uncompleted figures, but the recording of their interior harassment is consistently and vividly credible. Garnet Bowen is simply a collection of miscellaneous reactions and verbal eccentricities (for example his use of "bum" as a pejorative suffix) out of which it is impossible to fashion anything so unified as a single human being. The narrative in which his activities are recounted is equally miscellaneous—either slack and aimless, or awkward and tangled. Here is an extreme example, from Bowen's description of his Portuguese host: "But the conflict in his mind, however partial and intermittent, between his Britishness and his Portugueseness made him more interesting to Bowen than that, and the neat symbols of that conflict, the souvenir-stall coffee-tin on the elegant traditional-pattern cloth Rosie had embroidered, seemed not only absurd." Amis is still clearly concerned with style—he is at his best here, as in the earlier novels, when he is burlesquing the stylistic excesses of others—but he is not, in the present instance, concerned enough about his own.

I Like It Here is an amiable, careless book. Perhaps, like his hero, Amis wrote it to order; perhaps he simply got tired of it. Whatever the reason, it is neither a bad enough book to resent nor a good enough book to applaud very loudly.

Moral Anarchist

THE YOUNG CAESAR. By Rex Warner. Atlantic-Little, Brown. $4.75.

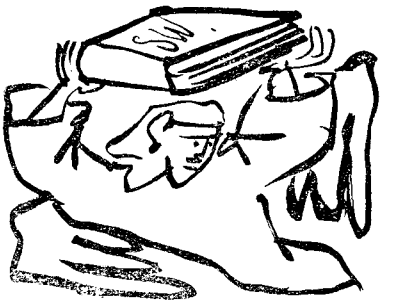
By MAX COSMAN

MR. WARNER has ever been concerned with arbitrary power. But he has been particularly interested in those who have seized it. He did not, of course, have to look far for baneful exemplars. They were before him on a natural scale at least three times during the last quarter of a century.

In any novel of his, then, attention has more often than not been focused on the dictatorial creature of the narrative. Perhaps it was inevitable that such Wells-Kafka characters of his as Rudolph in *The Wild Goose Chase,* Colonel Grimm in *The Professor,* the Air Vice-Marshal in *The Aerodrome,* the Governor in *Men of Stones,* being symbolic rather than full-bodied, should sooner or later give way to someone who did not have to be contrived, someone perhaps the very archetype of usurpers of power at any time—say Caesar himself.

So it has turned out. The expected study is now before us. Called a novel, either because it strains biographic fact through an assumed consciousness, or, seen from another view, because it comes in the guise of an autobiography set up for the occasion, *The Young Caesar* is bound to please all, and especially those who enjoy fictionalized historic figures. Like its predecessors in kind, *I, Claudius* and *The Ides of March,* or the recent *Memoirs of Hadrian,* it has authentic insight into personality and poetic deployment of record. Like them again, despite its muted dramatics, it has something else: that admiration which is given to those who in good or evil are larger than life.

The nature of the kingpin, the violent self-asserter, "the moral anarchist," to use the term Mr. Warner employs in his essay on the cult of power, is well-realized in Caesar. He is the thorough skeptic even as he serves the gods in the highest of religious offices. He rebels against venerable standards even as he urges a synthesis between them and new ones. He proclaims his adherence to necessity, to efficiency, even as he disregards both if they are invoked by anyone else. Gifted, audacious, extravagant, sentimental and cynical too, he gives himself to others, asking in return no more than they submit utterly to



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him. His colossal callousness, his inhumanity in the last analysis, can be seen when he sums up his activities for a certain period: he has stormed more than eight hundred cities, subdued three hundred nations, fought against as many as three million men. How satisfied he is, how detached in this recapitulation! Not a word about the appalling actualities of enslavement and slaughter, not to mention the ignoble looting that it represents!

Lack of authorial comment—this is the limitation in a novel in first person—is compensated for by Mr. Warner in the only way possible to him: he lets acts condemn pretensions. Does Caesar have reason to deplore an injustice meted out to his uncle Rutilius Rufus? In due time he perpetrates a similar injustice in prosecuting Rabirius. Does he, to touch on something profounder, indict the power-moves of opponents? His self-related machinations in a host of cases from Crassus to Catiline, from Pompey to Clodius is as complete a judgment on his power-mongering as anyone can offer.

That Caesar's aggrandizement but led to his quietus at the hands of friends is but one of the ironies, among other matters, which Mr. Warner found stored up for him in Suetonius. His own contribution is nevertheless not insignificant. In *The Young Caesar* he has finally given universal form to his thesis that in the long run man has very little to gain from the megalomaniac as ruler.

Ortega's Last Book

MAN AND PEOPLE. By José Ortega y Gasset. Norton. $4.50.

By THOMAS MOLNAR

THE illustrious name that Ortega y Gasset has acquired in the western world makes any adverse judgment of his book an embarrassing enterprise. As the dust jacket of *Man and People* proclaims, he is, first and forever, the author of *The Revolt of the Masses*, an inexorable diagnostician of present problems, a penetrating forecaster of the post-historic age. By his magnum opus he belongs to the category of writers whom, in the America of the mid-fifties, we call "social critics." He was a brilliant thinker, a fascinating wit, a man embodying an unusual mixture of traditions insofar as he represented ponderous nineteenth-century German schools

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of thought on the shores of the Mediterranean. But whether he was a political philosopher in his own right, is open to question.

Yet it is as a political philosopher that he is presented to us in his new, and last, book. *Man and People* is marred by two defects. It is based on a series of lectures delivered in Buenos Aires and elsewhere, and, if I may judge from a letter I received from Ortega shortly before he died and in which he referred to "urgent matters" he had on hand, the text was put together rather hastily. At places the book is verbose, at others it is poorly organized; now it reads like an essay, now like a chapter in a larger system. The second defect is the unfinished character of the book which had been intended as the first part of a new political philosophy: "man and people" to be followed by a study of politics, the State, law, etc. In its basic orientation, Ortega's sociological doctrine contradicts that of Durkheim. The "social" appears as the outgrowth of rapports between individuals, as the collective expression of their "usages," "observance," "powers," exercise of authority, etc. He discards the contract theory as childish, and stresses the inexhaustible richness of the phenomenon of one man facing another, the "I" facing the "you," and the appearance on their horizon of "the people". His descriptions read like phenomenological studies of human relationships, except that he never indulges in awkward jargon as does Sartre in certain chapters of *Being and Nothingness* where he deals with the same phenomena.

It is, however, questionable whether a social, political, and legal philosophy—which was to be the subject of a second volume—may be based on an analysis of interpersonal relations and the irruption of the collective factor. One might say that Ortega provides these inter-personal relations with plus and minus signs and, accordingly, the main theme which runs through the book is that *society* is also a *dis-society*, that it is composed of friendly as well as inimical tendencies, gestures, acts, approaches.

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and so on. The State, Ortega writes, for example, at the end of the work, is a "special body charged with making public power function in irresistible form." A few passages earlier he defines "public power" as the "active emanation of public opinion." This would mean that the State is either monolithic, or, as Ortega himself alludes to the possibility, that it falls apart and becomes the prey of chaos, revolution, and anarchy.

But the State, at least as we have known it in the western world, is neither a monolithic block, nor a latent revolution; and it does not necessarily represent public opinion in any discoverable form. The State is, rather, a historical framework of memories and continuities, and as such, it is the creation of a nation which both antedates it and carries it forward. (This nation may, at times, be the dominant minority within a multi-nation state.)

The method that Ortega uses in his last book ignores the element of consciousness, of free creativity, and, above all, of history. The book, therefore, seems limited in its scope, and artificial in its development.

Curious Journal

THE LONDON DIARY (1717-1721) AND OTHER WRITINGS. By William Byrd of Virginia. Edited by Louis B. Wright and Marion Tinling. Oxford. $10.

By JOHN COURNOS

JUDGED alone on the secret London Diary, which has hitherto reposed in the shape of a shorthand notebook in the library of the Virginia Historical Society, William Byrd II was not an estimable man. And, apparently, as he had had no intention of ever having the Diary made public, he has every reason for turning in his grave. In his lifetime he was a very active, energetic man, and, doubtless he is at this moment doing this very thing —furiously.

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William Byrd was in his time an important man. When he died, his landholdings in Virginia totaled 179,440 acres; his Westover was one of the country's grandest manors; he had played an important part in the governing of his region; he had had an intimate acquaintance with some famous English worthies; and he had once kissed King George I's hand, "at which," in his own words, "Lord Orkney was very angry."

As a young man he had one of the best educations available in the England which extended from the last years of Charles II's reign until the middle of the reign of William III. He experienced the existence of the well-to-do young man of his day, and attended the coffee-houses, the farces of the theaters, the masquerades and balls, taking part in the philanderings and frippery expected of an opulent young blood.

He returned to Virginia in 1696, a full-fledged lawyer at twenty-two, "ready to take his place among the ruling class to which he had been born." More important still, he brought back with him a devotion to Hebrew, Greek and Latin, and regarded daily attention to these, as well as to prayers, as an imperative duty not to be shirked. Reminders of this duty recur in each entry of his London Dairy to the point of tedium, all the more painful since the writer, though exceedingly pious, was far from being virtuous.

This, however, is anticipating. Twenty-one years were to pass before he would pen his secret Diary, which makes up the bulk of the present volume. He had had time to acquire a wife, a bad-tempered one, and to beget two daughters. He made his visit to England in 1715, where his wife died a year later of smallpox. Now a desirable bachelor of means, he set out to find an heiress in England, but in each case got short shrift. It was then, in December 1717, that he began his secret Diary to which the editors attach a literary importance it does not possess. It is dry, matter-of-fact, and very repetitious, with scarcely ever a happy turn of phrase to give it literary distinction. But it is honest and frank, wholly free of inhibitions, even in circumstances in which sensitive persons, possessing delicacy of feeling, would hesitate to express themselves.

Inevitably, with a repetitiousness resembling the routine of a ritual, each of the several hundred daily entries begins with the following words; or the same statement in variation: "I rose about 7 o'clock and read a chapter in Hebrew and some Greek in Lucian. I said my prayers and had milk for breakfast." Then follow the doings of the day, usually trite; visits to coffee-houses; reports of talks with male and female acquaintances, without details of what was said; reference to what was eaten. It would be possible to compile from this book a formidable list of dishes consumed during the eighteenth century in England and the Colonies. Finally, each entry concludes with the writer saying his prayers and going to bed, often after committing a sexual indiscretion, which evokes the phrase "for which God forgive me." Sometimes he would resolve to behave properly in the future, but before a day or two he would yield again to his impulses.

The editors assert that William Byrd's diaries "were never meant for any eyes except the writer's." They appear to have no explanation why he even wrote them. The one possible explanation is that he felt the human need for confession, and took this means to realize it. He remains a natural product of an Englishman's eighteenth century.

REVIEWERS

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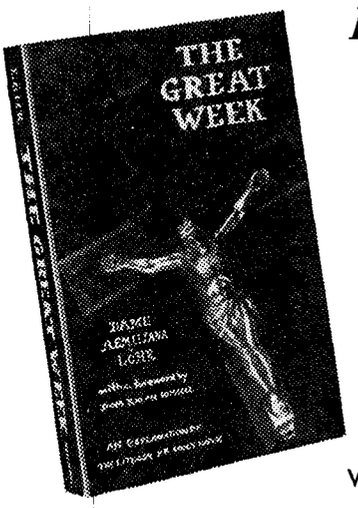
It will be difficult to find a book that is more Ideal for Lenten Reading



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The 1920's and the 1950's

The Commonweal's continuing interest in worker security is indicated by these excerpts—one published on the eve of the Great Depression and the other a month ago.

The "age question" in industry, in fact, is by now notoriously one of the most vulnerable points in the whole capitalistic system. . . . . The maturing wage-earner of today, indeed, finds himself confronted with a dilemma of the first order. Shall he concentrate on thrift, cutting out all but the essentials of food, shelter and clothing? If he does, he is quite likely to find many of the trades upon which his livelihood depends, directly or indirectly, disappearing into insolvency. Shall he maintain them with his spare currency during the years when hope runs high and anything seems possible?

Then, failing good luck, upon which he cannot rely, it is probable that the declining years of a hard-working life will be passed either in dependence upon relatives or in one of those casual employments flung to grey hairs, whose pittance keeps his name out of the dependent list but leaves the real tragedy intact. It is a rather cruel alternative. We leave its justification to public relations counselors and their ilk, who, borne upon the overhead of prosperity as upon a flood tide, are preaching capitalism as the great human "energizer."

—From The Commonweal,
January 11, 1928

Along about the thirties, roughly contemporaneous with the growth of the C.I.O., there arrived the first major change in labor's thinking about what should be in a union contract. It happened most naturally in those industries where one union represented large numbers of semi-skilled workers. To begin with, it was evident that such workers could not save enough money to pay for such fringes as vacations and assorted varieties of health and welfare plans.

It was also evident that by pooling a little money for each worker into one big common fund you could finance all kinds of things that would have been impossible by simply giving a little more money to each employee on an individual basis. This relies on the basic principle of all insurance, or the basic fact, that at any one time only a relatively few people are sick and even fewer die from their sickness. Given these simple truisms, it was inevitable that the labor movement should move onward and upward from wages and hours to paid vacations, holidays, sick leaves, maternity benefits, hospitalization, pensions, and life insurance.

—John C. Cort in The Commonweal,
February 14, 1958

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